

CONFIDENTIAL
INFORMATION REPORT

COUNTRY **USSR**
 SUBJECT **Interrogation and Sentencing of Prisoners**

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There is usually not more than one year between arrest and sentencing. In this one year, the Russian prison is so strong, so primitive, that it destroys you physically and psychologically. In a Russian prison the hygiene is so primitive, and there is so much hunger, that within a very short time the prisoner changes from a man into an animal. After a few months in the prison you think about nothing human any more—only food. There is a great relapse in your physical condition, for in a room of about 12 x 14 ft there are 44 people. There is no comfort at all. The prisoners lie on the floor and the food is so bad that there is always hunger. During this time there is frequent interrogation, especially during the night. In the prison the political and criminal prisoners are together.

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In 1937, after the Tretyak campaign, 70% were political prisoners, and in 1940 80% were political prisoners, mostly from Poland, Lithuania and Latvia. During the interrogation you are charged with your paragraph, and if the NKVD does not get good information from you, you are sent into solitary confinement. [redacted] not beaten by the NKVD, but the other prisoners in [redacted] came back in the morning black and blue.

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[redacted] in this prison you spend no longer than a year. When the interrogation is finished you get the sentence through the Troika; that is, the NKVD Court. This Troika consists of three soldiers—one officer and two sergeants. The determination of the sentence takes only two minutes. You

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can sign your name to it or you cannot; it makes no difference. You cannot say anything or ask any questions. [redacted] a thousand people got sentenced in one day. [redacted] sentence was three years at slave labor for violation of Paragraph 18, which is illegal entry into the country. This was in Starobelsk, near Krakow. One is usually happy to go to the camp, for there at least one can work and be in the fresh air. Especially for specialists, it is better to go to the camp. In every city there is a prisoner slave labor camp. The big criminal and big political prisoners are sent to the prison camps outside Russia proper: North Arctic, Kamchatka, Sakhalin, and the 160th camp in Murmansk. In 1941 the camp at Murmansk was eliminated because the railroad there was finished.

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